

THE BUSINESS OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL. THE FUTURE OF THE GAME.

ISSUE 04

JUNE 2026

# FOOTBALL BUSINESS AFRICA

INSIGHT. ANALYSIS. SOLUTIONS.

## BUILT TO LOSE?

### AFRICA, THE WORLD CUP, AND FOOTBALL'S UNEQUAL ECONOMY

Why Africa powers global football but captures only a fraction of the industry built around it.

#### EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT THE INVISIBLE ATHLETE

How the lack of data infrastructure is costing African sport billions.

#### FEATURE KOBO SPORT

Building the epicenter of sport in Central Africa.

#### MARKET PERSPECTIVE THE NEXT FRONTIER

Data, institutions and the future of African football.

#### + NEWS, ANALYSIS & MOVERS

Key developments shaping the African football business.



THE WORLD CUP REMINDS US THAT AFRICA  
ALREADY INSPIRES THE GAME.  
THE NEXT CHALLENGE IS ENSURING THAT AFRICA  
ALSO HELPS SHAPE ITS FUTURE.



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Building the business of African football.



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AFRICA ALREADY  
INSPIRES THE GAME.  
THE NEXT CHALLENGE  
IS ENSURING THAT  
AFRICA ALSO HELPS  
SHAPE ITS FUTURE.

# THE WEEK THE WORLD COMES CALLING

## This week, the FIFA World Cup returns.

For a few extraordinary weeks, football will once again become the world's common language. Stadiums will fill, television audiences will reach into the billions, and African players will once again stand among the defining figures of the tournament.

But this issue of *Football Business Africa* asks a different question. What happens after the final whistle?

As our cover story argues, Africa has become one of global football's great exporters of talent while still capturing only a modest share of the wealth generated around the game. The challenge is no longer proving that African football can produce greatness. The challenge is building the institutions, data systems and business models that allow the continent to benefit more fully from that greatness.

That conversation continues in our exclusive excerpt from *The Invisible Athlete*, a book that explores how the absence of reliable data is costing African sport billions of dollars every year.

Finally, we turn to solutions. Our feature on Kobo Sport examines an ambitious effort to build a fully integrated sports ecosystem in Central Africa—one that connects talent to education, technology, health and opportunity.



## THIS ISSUE ALSO MARKS A NEW CHAPTER FOR *FOOTBALL BUSINESS AFRICA*.

From this month forward, the magazine becomes a **monthly thematic publication**, dedicating each edition to one major issue shaping the future of African sport.

The World Cup reminds us that Africa already inspires the game.

**The next challenge is ensuring that Africa also helps shape its future.**



**ANDRÉ-MICHEL ESSOUNGOU**

Editor  
Football Business Africa

June 2026



AFRICAN  
FOOTBALL  
IS MOVING.

THE STORIES  
SHAPING ITS  
BUSINESS  
FUTURE.



## MOROCCO TURNS FOOTBALL INTO NATIONAL STRATEGY

As the global game looks beyond the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Morocco is accelerating preparations for the 2030 tournament it will co-host with Spain and Portugal. Investments in airports, transport networks and sporting infrastructure suggest that football is being treated as an economic development project rather than simply a sporting event. The approach is increasingly viewed across Africa as a possible model for linking football to tourism, investment and national branding.



## CAF'S BIGGER WORLD CUP CHANGES THE BUSINESS EQUATION

The expansion of the FIFA World Cup has increased Africa's direct qualification places from five to nine, with an additional intercontinental play-off opportunity. More African teams on football's biggest stage means greater commercial visibility, more sponsorship opportunities and potentially larger markets for broadcasters and investors. The challenge now is converting tournament exposure into lasting institutional growth.



## A NEW MAP OF AFRICAN CLUB FOOTBALL

The 2025-26 CAF Champions League and Confederation Cup once again demonstrated the growing geographical diversity of elite African football. Clubs from Southern, North and East Africa continue to strengthen their competitive and commercial ambitions, while larger attendances and improved production standards are gradually raising the profile of continental competitions. The next challenge will be turning sporting momentum into stronger long-term media rights.



## THE RACE FOR FOOTBALL INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEGUN

Across the continent, governments are increasingly investing in stadiums, training centres and transport systems linked to major sporting events. Morocco's preparations for AFCON and the 2030 World Cup illustrate a broader trend: football infrastructure is increasingly being viewed as part of urban development and economic policy. Whether these investments generate long-term returns will depend on how effectively they are integrated into local football ecosystems.



# COMPLETE GROUP STAGE SCHEDULE - AFRICAN TEAMS (30 MATCHES)



DATE (JUNE 2026)	GRP.	FIXTURE	KINSHASA (UTC+1)	NAIROBI (UTC+3)	STADIUM & CITY
Thursday 11	A	Mexico 🇲🇪 vs South Africa 🇿🇦	20:00	22:00	Azteca Stadium, Mexico
Saturday 13	C	Brazil 🇧🇷 vs Morocco 🇲🇦	23:00	01:00 (Sun. 14)	New York New Jersey Stadium
Sunday 14	E	Côte d'Ivoire 🇳🇪 vs Ecuador 🇪🇨	00:00 (Mon. 15)	02:00 (Mon. 15)	Philadelphia Stadium
Monday 15	F	Sweden 🇸🇪 vs Tunisia 🇹🇳	03:00	05:00	Estadio Monterrey
Monday 15	H	Spain 🇪🇸 vs Cape Verde 🇲🇵	17:00	19:00	Atlanta Stadium
Monday 15	G	Belgium 🇧🇪 vs Egypt 🇪🇬	20:00	22:00	Seattle Stadium
Tuesday 16	I	France 🇫🇷 vs Senegal 🇸🇳	20:00	22:00	New York New Jersey Stadium
Wednesday 17	J	Argentina 🇦🇷 vs Algeria 🇩🇿	02:00	04:00	Kansas City Stadium
Wednesday 17	K	Portugal 🇵🇹 vs DR Congo 🇷🇨	19:00	21:00	Houston Stadium
Thursday 18	L	Ghana 🇬🇭 vs Panama 🇵🇦	00:00	02:00	Toronto Stadium
Thursday 18	A	Czech Republic 🇨🇪 vs South Africa 🇿🇦	17:00	19:00	Atlanta Stadium
Friday 19	C	Scotland 🇸🇬 vs Morocco 🇲🇦	23:00	01:00 (Sat. 20)	Gillette Stadium, Foxborough
Saturday 20	E	Germany 🇩🇪 vs Côte d'Ivoire 🇳🇪	21:00	23:00	Toronto Stadium
Sunday 21	F	Tunisia 🇹🇳 vs Japan 🇯🇵	05:00	07:00	Estadio Monterrey
Sunday 21	H	Uruguay 🇺🇾 vs Cape Verde 🇲🇵	23:00	01:00 (Mon. 22)	Miami Stadium
Monday 22	G	New Zealand 🇳🇿 vs Egypt 🇪🇬	02:00	04:00	BC Place, Vancouver
Tuesday 23	I	Norway 🇳🇴 vs Senegal 🇸🇳	01:00	03:00	New York New Jersey Stadium

DATE (JUNE 2026)	GRP.	FIXTURE	KINSHASA (UTC+1)	NAIROBI (UTC+3)	STADIUM & CITY
Tuesday 23	J	Jordan 🇵🇸 vs Algeria 🇩🇿	04:00	06:00	San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Tuesday 23	L	England 🇬🇧 vs Ghana 🇬🇭	21:00	23:00	Boston Stadium
Wednesday 24	K	Colombia 🇨🇴 vs DR Congo 🇷🇨	03:00	05:00	Estadio Akron, Guadalajara
Wednesday 24	C	Morocco 🇲🇦 vs Haiti 🇧🇪	23:00	01:00 (Thu. 25)	Atlanta Stadium
Thursday 25	A	South Africa 🇿🇦 vs South Korea 🇰🇷	02:00	04:00	Estadio Monterrey
Thursday 25	E	Curaçao 🇨🇼 vs Côte d'Ivoire 🇳🇪	21:00	23:00	Philadelphia Stadium
Friday 26	F	Tunisia 🇹🇳 vs Netherlands 🇳🇱	00:00	02:00	Kansas City Stadium
Friday 26	I	Senegal 🇸🇳 vs Iraq 🇮🇶	20:00	22:00	Toronto Stadium
Saturday 27	H	Cape Verde 🇲🇵 vs Saudi Arabia 🇸🇦	01:00	03:00	Houston Stadium
Saturday 27	G	Egypt 🇪🇬 vs Iran 🇮🇷	04:00	06:00	Seattle Stadium
Saturday 27	L	Croatia 🇭🇷 vs Ghana 🇬🇭	22:00	00:00 (Sun. 28)	Philadelphia Stadium
Sunday 28	K	DR Congo 🇷🇨 vs Uzbekistan 🇺🇿	00:30	02:30	Atlanta Stadium
Sunday 28	J	Algeria 🇩🇿 vs Austria 🇦🇹	03:00	05:00	Kansas City Stadium



**30**  
MATCHES.

**12**  
GROUPS.



**AFRICA**  
IN FULL FORCE.

# BUILT TO LOSE?

## AFRICA, THE WORLD CUP, AND FOOTBALL'S UNEQUAL ECONOMY

Africa powers global football.  
Its players light up the world's  
biggest stages. But the  
continent captures only a  
fraction of the game's wealth.

Why? And what can change?



*Africa exports players.  
The rest of the world  
exports systems.*



# THE PARADOX OF ABUNDANCE

Africa powers global football.  
So why does it earn so little from it?

Walk through the world's elite leagues on any given weekend and Africa's imprint on football becomes impossible to ignore.

African players are among the world's most valuable assets. Yet Africa's football economy remains comparatively small.

European clubs scout Africa early, develop talent within stronger systems, and monetize it through transfers, sponsorships, media rights and global branding.

Many African leagues, meanwhile, wrestle with limited broadcasting revenues, fragile sponsorship ecosystems, inconsistent governance and infrastructure deficits.

Africa produces talent.  
Others industrialize it.

## AFRICA'S FOOTBALL FOOTPRINT



60+

African players in Europe's  
Top 5 leagues (2024/25  
season)



~40%

Of players in the French  
Ligue 1 are of African  
heritage



BILLIONS

In transfer fees generated  
from African players  
over the past decade



*Africa produces football value  
at scale while capturing only a  
fraction of the industry built around it.*



# WHERE AFRICA LOSES VALUE

Four invisible leaks in football's global economy.

**1**



## CHEAP TALENT, EXPENSIVE OUTCOMES

Many African clubs sell early because they must. By the time a player becomes a €50 million or €100 million asset, the ecosystem that first developed him may have captured only a small fraction of the final transfer value.

**2**



## FIFA'S TRAINING COMPENSATION PUZZLE

FIFA's mechanisms were designed to reward development. But poor documentation, weak administration and limited legal capacity mean many clubs cannot receive what they are entitled to.

**3**



## FOOTBALL WITHOUT BROADCAST MONEY

Most African leagues struggle to secure stable TV deals. Without media revenue, commercial growth and investment remain out of reach. Passion is abundant. Monetization is not.

**4**



## THE INVISIBLE FOOTBALLER

Many players lack digital identities, performance records or standardized data. Talent without proof struggles to become capital.

### HOW FIFA TRAINING COMPENSATION WORKS



Ages 12–21  
Development years generally considered.



First professional contract  
May trigger training compensation.



Certain international transfers  
Can activate additional solidarity payments.

## THE FOOTBALL VALUE LEAKAGE CHAIN



### THE CHALLENGE FOR MANY AFRICAN CLUBS

- ✗ Incomplete records
- ✗ Weak administrative systems
- ✗ Limited legal support
- ✗ Uneven enforcement



Millions of dollars in compensation exist within the system. The challenge is accessing them.

**“ TALENT WITHOUT PROOF  
STRUGGLES TO BECOME CAPITAL.**



Documentation. Data. Legal capacity.  
They turn potential into economic value.

# FIFA COMPENSATION & THE INVISIBLE FOOTBALLER



## THE PROMISE

FIFA's solidarity and training compensation mechanisms were created to ensure those who develop players share in the rewards.



## THE REALITY

Many African clubs lack the systems, records and legal support to claim what they are entitled to.



## THE COST

Millions of dollars in potential revenue are never recovered, reducing investment in facilities, coaches and player development.



A player without documents is a player without protection.

A club without records is a club without leverage.

## THE INVISIBLE ATHLETE

- ✗ No digital ID
- ✗ No performance history
- ✗ No medical records
- ✗ No transfer history
- ✗ No visibility
- ✗ No bargaining power

In modern football, invisibility is expensive.

## EXPLAINER

### HOW FIFA TRAINING COMPENSATION WORKS



**Ages 12–21**  
Development years generally considered.



**First professional contract**  
May trigger training compensation.



**Certain international transfers**  
Can activate additional solidarity payments.



**The challenge for many African clubs**

- Incomplete records
- Weak administrative systems
- Limited legal support
- Uneven enforcement

# WHO PROFITS FROM AFRICAN FOOTBALL?

Many winners. Many responsibilities.



## CLUBS WITH PATIENCE

Elite clubs can invest time and resources to develop players and monetize them when value peaks.



## AGENTS & INTERMEDIARIES

Networks of agents, scouts and lawyers influence player movement and financial outcomes.



## MEDIA & DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Broadcasters, data firms, betting companies and digital platforms capture value far beyond the pitch.

## CASE STUDY

### RWANDA'S FOOTBALL ECONOMY BET

Partnerships with Arsenal, PSG and Atlético Madrid aim to use football as a tool for tourism, international branding and investment attraction.

Supporters call it soft power.  
Critics call it expensive branding.

Either way, the lesson is clear:  
**some governments understand  
football as industry.**  
Not just entertainment.



## BUT AFRICA ALSO BEARS RESPONSIBILITY

Fragmented leagues. Weak governance. Inconsistent administration. Short-term planning.

Talent exists abundantly. Institutions struggle to scale around it.

**A GLOBAL IMBALANCE. A DOMESTIC SYSTEMS PROBLEM.**

# HOW AFRICA COULD WIN MORE

Football's future will belong not only to those who produce talent—but to those who build systems around it.

Africa already has football's most abundant resource: talent.

The challenge is to capture more of the value created by that talent.

Five priorities emerge.



**1**



## MAKE ATHLETES VISIBLE

Build national player registries.

Document first.  
Digitize second.  
Analyze third.

Visibility is the first step toward protection, financing and value creation.

**2**



## STOP LEAVING FIFA MONEY ON THE TABLE

Professionalize training compensation and solidarity claims.

- Better legal support
- Stronger registration systems
- Administrative modernization
- Federation assistance

Millions already exist in the system. Capture your share.

**3**



## BUILD STRONGER DOMESTIC FOOTBALL ECONOMIES

Treat leagues like businesses.

- Broadcasting
- Sponsorship
- Matchday experience
- Streaming
- Digital engagement
- Merchandising
- Fan communities

Stronger leagues create more value—and keep more of it at home.

**4**



## INVEST IN DATA— WITHOUT LOSING HUMAN JUDGMENT

Technology should strengthen expertise, not replace it.

- Better scouting tools
- Performance analytics
- Medical monitoring
- Video intelligence

The best systems combine intuition and analytics.

**5**



## THINK REGIONALLY, NOT ONLY NATIONALLY

Scale creates leverage.

- Shared media rights
- Regional competitions
- Cross-border academies
- Common standards
- Collaborative digital platforms

Larger markets. Greater visibility. Stronger bargaining power.



Africa does not need to replicate Europe. Its challenge is organizational. Can the continent create institutions as strong as its talent?



# AFTER THE WORLD CUP

African players will shape the spectacle.  
The question is whether Africa will move with it.

When the final whistle blows at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, African players will once again have helped shape football's greatest spectacle.

Some will leave as global stars.  
Transfer valuations may rise.  
New sponsorships will emerge.  
Elite clubs will strengthen their squads.  
The football economy will continue to move.

The deeper question is whether Africa itself will move with it.

Africa does not suffer from a shortage of football genius. Its challenge is institutional. Economic. Structural.

Potential inspires.  
Institutions create value.

The next chapter depends on a profound shift: from seeing football primarily as sport—to understanding it also as industry.

Ecosystems connect academies to clubs.  
Players to data. Supporters to platforms.  
Football to investment. They think in decades, not in transfer windows.



## BUILDING SOVEREIGN FOOTBALL ECONOMIES



### BETTER GOVERNANCE

Strong leadership and transparent institutions build trust and attract investment.



### STRONGER FEDERATIONS

Professional administration and capability drive long-term impact.



### TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

Data systems, digital ID and analytics unlock value and opportunity.



### LEGAL CAPACITY

Legal expertise protects rights and maximizes training and solidarity returns.



### LONG-TERM PLANNING

Sustainable strategies create resilience and compounding value.



### REGIONAL COOPERATION

Shared markets, competitions and resources create scale and global leverage.

**INSTITUTIONS TURN TALENT INTO GENERATIONAL WEALTH.**

## A CONVERSATION ABOUT SOVEREIGNTY

Who owns football's stories?  
Who owns its data?  
Who owns its markets?  
Who shapes its future?

The answers will determine whether Africa remains a supplier—or becomes one of football's architects.



*Africa's future may not depend on producing better players. The world already knows Africa can do that. Its future may depend on producing better football economies.*



# THE INVISIBLE ATHLETE

Why Africa's Sports Systems Cannot See Their Own Talent – And What Data Infrastructure Can Do About It

## TALENT IS UNIVERSAL. PROOF IS NOT.

Africa fuels the global sports economy, yet the continent's sports sector remains stuck in the informal shadows. Why do millions of dollars in FIFA Solidarity Payments go uncollected every year? Why do Ghost Players haunt our national teams? Why are African academies unable to capture the value of the stars they produce?

## The answer is not a lack of talent. It is a lack of data.

*The Invisible Athlete* argues that the "unbankability" of African sport is a self-inflicted wound caused by the lack of verifiable records. Without a digital history, an athlete is a risk. With a digital history, they are an asset.

Drawing on economic analysis and real-world case studies (from recent age-fraud scandals to the "Low-Tech" success of health registries) this book maps the path to formalization.

- How do we plug the multi-million dollar FIFA "Solidarity Leak"?
- How do we use school censuses to map national talent?
- How do we turn a player registry into a secure financial asset?

## The era of the Invisible African Athlete can and must end now!



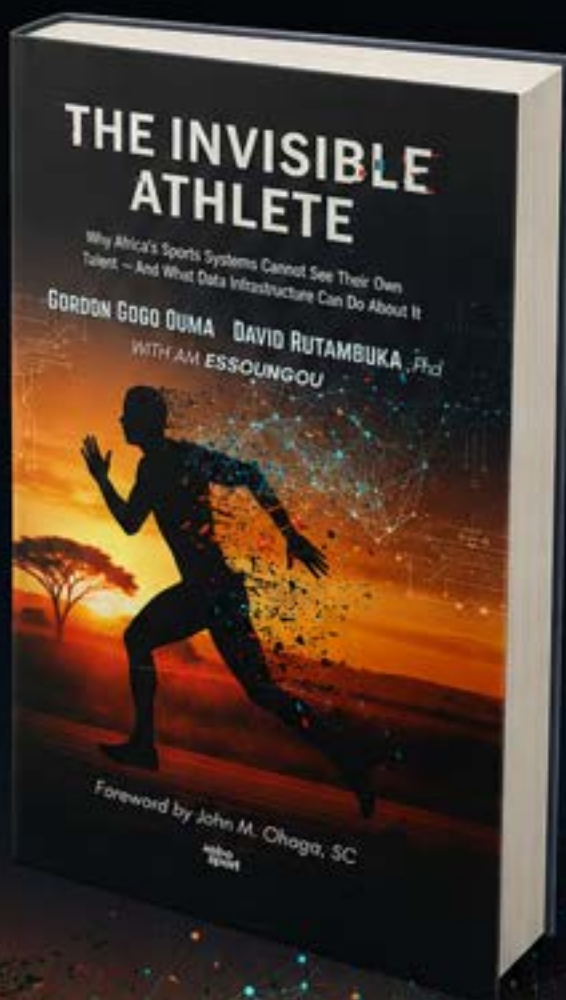
**Gordon Gogo Ouma** is a Sports Lawyer and founder of GMA Global Sports and Business, specializing in the governance of emerging phygital sports. He is based in Nairobi, Kenya.



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Data is the new infrastructure.  
Let's build it. Let's own it.  
Let's bank on our talent.

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## FEATURE SERIES

# THE INVISIBLE ATHLETE

Why Africa's Sports Systems Cannot See Their Own Talent – And What Data Infrastructure Can Do About It

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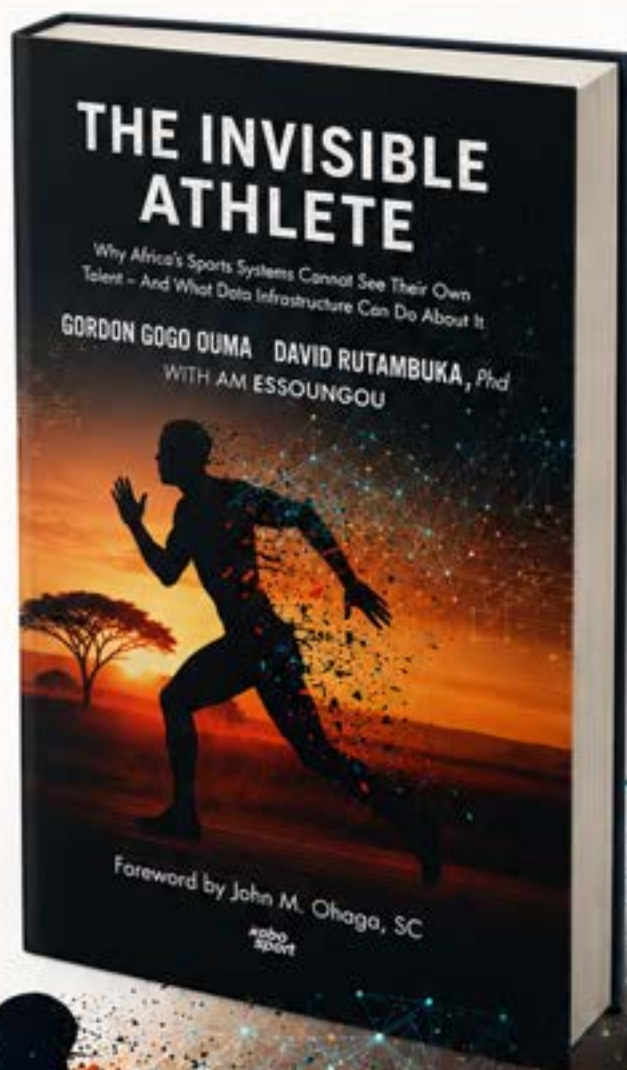
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**The era of the Invisible African Athlete can and must end now!**

## CHAPTER 2 /

### THE HIDDEN COST: HOW DATA DEFICITS ARE BANKRUPTING AFRICAN SPORT (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT)

This chapter unpacks the silent crisis draining billions from African sport. From the Valuation Gap and the Solidarity Hemorrhage to the Competitive Disadvantage and the urgent need for Digital Sovereignty—this is the story of how invisibility costs, and how visibility can change everything.



## CHAPTER 2

## 2.1 THE VALUATION GAP: WHY AFRICAN GIANTS REMAIN FINANCIAL DWARFS

Sport in Africa is often discussed in terms of passion, potential, and raw talent. These descriptors, while true, obscure the fundamental economic reality: as a sector, African sport is punching significantly below its weight. It holds transformative potential as an industry capable of generating employment, stimulating infrastructure development, driving tourism, and attracting foreign direct investment. Yet, this potential remains largely theoretical.

The most stark illustration of this failure is the valuation ceiling that traps even the continent's most successful sporting entities. To understand the cost of the data deficit, we must look at the apex of the African game. Clubs like Mamelodi Sundowns in South Africa and Al Ahly in Egypt represent the gold standard of African football management. They dominate their domestic leagues, compete perennially for continental honors, and command the loyalty of millions. However, when viewed through the lens of the global sports economy, these giants are financial dwarfs. Valuations for these top-tier African clubs hover in the range of €30 million to €40 million. While impressive in a local context, these figures are rounding errors in the global marketplace. They are dwarfed not just by the elite of Europe, but by mid-tier clubs in the English Championship or the French Ligue 1—clubs that may produce less on-field talent and win fewer trophies, but possess vastly superior commercial valuations.

Why does this disparity exist? It is not a lack of fans. Al Ahly boasts a fanbase estimated at over 50 million people, arguably larger than that of many European heavyweights. It is not a lack of on-field success. The disparity is structural, and it is rooted in data.

Modern sports valuation is driven by the ability to monetize an audience, not just ticket sales. A club like Real Madrid, which generated over €1 billion in revenue in the 2023/24 season, does not do so primarily by selling tickets to the Santiago Bernabéu. They do so by selling verified access to a global audience. They can tell a sponsor exactly who their fans are, where they live, what they buy, and how they engage digitally. Their "fan" is a data point, a verifiable, reachable, monetizable unit.

In contrast, the African club's fan is largely anonymous. Al Ahly may have 50 million supporters, but if those supporters are watching on communal televisions, buying counterfeit jerseys, and engaging in unmeasured social media conversations, they remain economically invisible to the global sponsor. A sponsor cannot buy what they cannot measure. Without the "digital infrastructure" to capture, segment, and analyze this fanbase, African clubs are forced to rely on the most basic form of revenue: match-day ticket sales. They are trapping themselves in a physical economy while the rest of the sports world has migrated to a digital one.

The consequence of this data blindness was starkly visible in the inaugural (and now defunct) African Football League (AFL) in 2024. This tournament was designed with modern data standards—centralized broadcasting, verified metrics, and transparent commercial packages. Mamelodi Sundowns earned \$4 million for winning the traditional CAF Champions League, a tournament plagued by data opacity. For winning the AFL, a shorter tournament built on better data rails, the prize money and commercial ecosystem yielded significantly higher value, with the tournament distributing substantial sums. The lesson is unambiguous: high-value capital only flows where data (audience demographics, engagement metrics, and performance statistics) is transparent. African clubs remain poor not because they lack support, but because they cannot prove it.

“  
A club's  
value today  
is no longer  
what it wins  
on the pitch,  
but what it  
can prove  
about its  
audience.  
”



CHAPTER 2 //

# 2.2 THE SOLIDARITY HEMORRHAGE: CALCULATING THE COST OF SILENCE





**W**hile the valuation gap is a missed opportunity, the loss of FIFA Solidarity Payments represents an active financial hemorrhage. This is not money we could make; this is money we are making, but failing to collect.

The global transfer system includes a mechanism designed specifically to redistribute wealth from the elite to the grassroots.

Under the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, the FIFA Solidarity Mechanism dictates that 5% of any international transfer fee must be deducted and distributed to the clubs that trained the player between the ages of 12 and 23.

The logic is sound: if a player transfers from a French club to an English club for €50 million, the small academy in Senegal or Ghana that discovered him at age 12 and trained him until 15 is entitled to a specific cut of that fee.

### THE MATH IS TRANSFORMATIVE

-  For a €50 million transfer, the total solidarity pot is €2.5 million.
-  A grassroots academy entitled to just three years of that formation (ages 12, 13, and 14) would be due approximately €250,000.
-  In the context of a number of African academies, where annual operating budgets might be less than €20,000, this sum is not just revenue—it is a generational endowment.
-  It is the difference between survival and expansion, between a dirt pitch and a turf field.

Yet, year after year, African academies leave this money on the table.

The mechanism of this loss is bureaucratic. To claim the solidarity payment, the training club must provide proof of registration.

They must submit the “Electronic Player Passport”—a verified document showing exactly when the player joined and left.

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE WALL

In a data-mature environment, this is a button-click. The English FA’s database can instantly generate a history for any player, timestamped and verified.

In the African context, this simple administrative requirement becomes an insurmountable wall. Because the player was never registered in a central digital database at age 12, there is no “digital footprint” to print.

The academy might have paper records, handwritten notes, or the testimonies of coaches, but FIFA does not process paperwork based on memory. Without the digital record, the claim is rejected. The money is not paid.

The transfer happens, the millions change hands, but the academy that built the foundation receives nothing.



### THE COST WE LEAVE BEHIND

Every unclaimed solidarity payment is capital that could have been used to:



**Build facilities**  
Professionalize academy infrastructure.



**Employ staff**  
Hire qualified coaches, scouts, and analysts.



**Educate players**  
Provide schooling and life skills programs.



**Develop talent**  
Invest in more players who could be the next stars.

The system is designed to reward those who discover and develop talent.  
But without data, African academies remain invisible, and invisible work gets unpaid.

## CHAPTER 2 //

## 2.3 THE COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE: DATA AS A STRATEGIC ASSET

This failure to collect data and claim payments does more than just deplete bank accounts; it cripples the competitive integrity of African football. It creates a vicious cycle where the best talent is developed on a shoestring budget, sold at a discount, and generates wealth for foreign ecosystems that are data-rich.






Consider the recruitment market. A European club's scouting department does not rely on chance. They use data analytics to identify a 16-year-old in Lagos or Accra, analyzing their passing accuracy, sprint speed, decision-making under pressure, and injury risk profile. They build a comprehensive model of the player's potential.

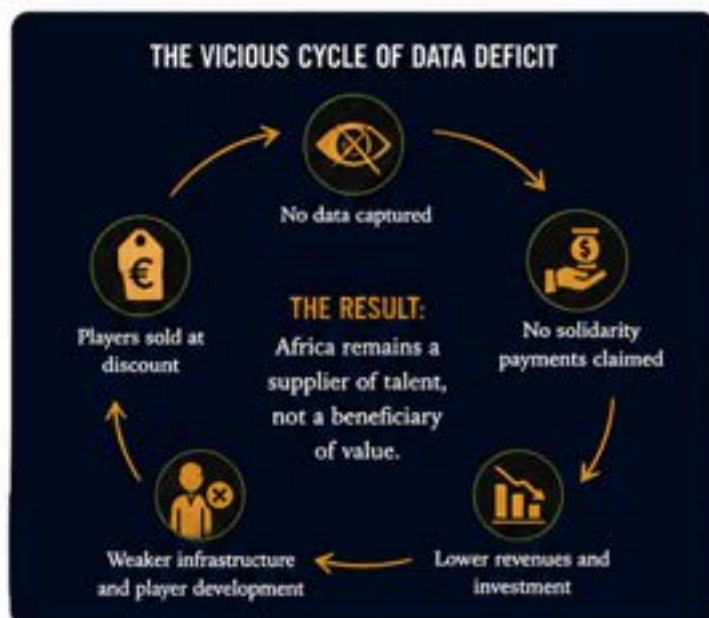
An African club, lacking the same data infrastructure, is often blind to the true market value of its own asset. They are negotiating based on reputation or need, not on verified performance metrics. This information asymmetry ensures that the seller (the African club) always loses.

Furthermore, the lack of data affects team performance. Data is not just for selling players; it is for winning matches. Performance analytics can optimize training loads, reduce injuries, and exploit tactical weaknesses in opponents. When African leagues lack standardized data capture, they cannot benchmark their teams against global standards. They do not know what they do not measure.

### DATA DRIVES PERFORMANCE





Without data, African clubs cannot:

-  Identify and maximize player potential
-  Optimize training and prevent injuries
-  Benchmark against global standards
-  Make informed tactical decisions
-  Negotiate fair player valuations







### INFORMATION ASYMMETRY: WHO WINS, WHO LOSES?

#### DATA-RICH CLUBS (THE BUYER)

-  Know the player's true potential
-  Access performance and risk data
-  Negotiate from a position of strength
-  Pay less, gain more

VS

#### DATA-POOR CLUBS (THE SELLER)

-  Lack verified performance data
-  Rely on reputation and instinct
-  Negotiate from a position of weakness
-  Get less, lose more



The imbalance is not about talent. It is about **information.**

## CHAPTER 2 //

## 2.4 THE CASE FOR A NEW INFRASTRUCTURE: BUILDING THE DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY OF SPORT

The solution is not more passion. The solution is not more talent identification camps. The solution is infrastructure—a continental commitment to building a digital nervous system for sport.

Relying on European or international databases to solve African problems is a colonial mindset in the digital age. It means building a house on rented land. If the external database changes its terms, or if access becomes too expensive, the African game is locked out of its own history.

Africa must build its own system. This system must be unified, from the grassroots to the professional level.



### Every Player, Identified.

A single, mandatory digital ID for every player on the continent from the age of 10.



### Every Movement, Recorded.

Every transfer, loan, and contract must be logged in real-time.



### Every Performance, Measured.

Standardized performance metrics that follow the player through their career.



### Every Right, Protected.

A system that automatically triggers eligibility for solidarity payments, ensuring money flows back to the source.

This infrastructure is the bedrock of economic independence. It transforms the narrative from begging for money to commanding investment. When an African club can walk into a boardroom in London or Dubai and say, "We have 5 million verified fans, 500 players in our system, and 100 data points per player," the conversation changes. They are no longer seeking charity; they are offering a partnership.

**AFRICA MUST  
BUILD ITS OWN SYSTEM.  
OUR TALENT.  
OUR DATA.  
OUR FUTURE.**



### THE PARADIGM SHIFT

The data deficit is not a technical problem; it is a strategic vulnerability.

**Data is the new oil of sport.**

The nations and clubs that own the data own the players. The clubs that own the players own the future.

**Until Africa owns its data, Africa will not own its destiny.**

### THE UNPAID BILL: A SUMMARY



#### Valuation Gap

African clubs are undervalued (dwarfs) because they cannot monetize or verify their massive fanbases.



#### Solidarity Hemorrhage

Academies are losing millions (€250,000+ per transfer) due to inability to prove a player's early historical training.



#### Competitive Disadvantage

Clubs are making inferior decisions because they lack data on player performance, market value, and injury risk.

The invisible athlete costs Africa billions. Building the digital infrastructure is the first step to making our talent visible, our clubs valuable, and our continent wealthy.

## CHAPTER 2

## 2.5 THE VISION: THE INVISIBLE ATHLETE TO THE INVISIBLE BILLION-DOLLAR ATHLETE

The ultimate goal of closing the data deficit is not just to save money or generate revenue. It is to unlock the full economic potential of African sport as a catalyst for national development.

Imagine an ecosystem where a 14-year-old in a rural academy in Mali has the same digital visibility as a 14-year-old in a La Liga academy. Imagine an ecosystem where an African league can negotiate a broadcast deal based on verified audience data, not hopeful estimates. Imagine an ecosystem where our clubs are valued at their true worth—based on their 50 million fans, not just their stadium capacity.

This is the promise of data. It is the great equalizer. It levels the playing field between the club with the biggest budget and the club with the best database.

The cost of inaction is too high. Every year we delay building this infrastructure, another generation of talent is exported for free, another billion dollars is left unclaimed, and another opportunity to build sustainable economies is missed.

It is time for Africa to stop being the supplier of invisible athletes and become the owner of visible, valuable, and irreplaceable assets.

### WHAT A DATA-MATURE AFRICAN ECOSYSTEM UNLOCKS



**Better Broadcast Deals**  
Negotiated on verified audience data, not hopeful estimates.



**Stronger Sponsorships**  
Sponsors invest more when they can measure and target real fans.



**Higher Club Valuations**  
Clubs valued on true worth—based on millions of engaged fans, not just stadium capacity.



**Infrastructure Investment**  
Data attracts investors to build facilities, leagues, and communities.



**Player Development Pathways**  
Young players tracked, developed, and promoted with data-backed confidence.

### CASE EXAMPLE: THE POWER OF DATA RAILS

The inaugural African Football League (AFL) in 2024 proved what is possible when data standards are prioritized.

Mamelodi Sundowns earned \$4 million for winning the traditional CAF Champions League, a tournament plagued by data opacity.

For winning the AFL, a shorter tournament built on better data rails, the prize money and commercial ecosystem yielded significantly higher value, with the tournament distributing substantial sums.

#### CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE WINNINGS



\$4M

DATA OPACITY  
LIMITED VALUE

VS

#### AFRICAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE WINNINGS



HIGHER VALUE

TRANSPARENT DATA  
MAXIMIZED VALUE



“

High-value capital only flows where data is transparent. African clubs remain poor not because they lack support, but because they cannot prove it.

”



THE BUSINESS BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

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INVESTMENT & GROWTH OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL



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GRAND FORMAT

# THE CAMPUS THAT WANTS TO CHANGE AFRICAN SPORT

How Kobo Sport plans to turn Central Africa's raw talent into a structured industry.

For decades, Central Africa has exported athletes while importing systems. Kobo Sport believes the continent can do better. On a 12-hectare campus in Kinshasa, the project aims to combine elite sport, education, health, technology and hospitality into a single ecosystem designed to keep more value at home.

**kobo  
sport**



**20M+**  
Population in  
Kinshasa metro area



**12 HA**  
Titled land in a  
strategic location



**Elite sport**  
education, health  
technology, hospitality



**One vision:**  
a sustainable sports  
economy

# A PROJECT BORN FROM NECESSITY

Some projects emerge from market research. Others emerge from frustration.

Kobo Sport belongs to the second category. After years of observing the systematic waste of African sporting talent, its founders reached a simple conclusion: the continent does not suffer from a shortage of structures.

The ambition is therefore larger than building another academy.

The ambition is to build an ecosystem.

Located in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kobo Sport is developing a 12-hectare integrated sports campus designed to connect talent development, education, healthcare, technology and business.

The objective is straightforward:

**Transform one of the world's richest talent pools into a sustainable sports economy.**



We are not simply training players. We are building an ecosystem.

## KOBO SPORT AT A GLANCE



### LOCATION

Kinshasa,  
DRC



### CAMPUS

12 hectares



### CORE PHILOSOPHY

Sport + Education  
+ Health +  
Technology +  
Business



### MISSION

Transform raw  
talent into  
sustainable  
economic value



### LONG-TERM VISION

Create the leading  
integrated sports  
ecosystem in  
Central Africa



# THE CENTRAL AFRICAN PARADOX

Central Africa possesses one of the youngest populations on earth.

The region produces footballers, basketball players and athletes of extraordinary quality. Yet the infrastructure surrounding them often remains fragile.

- ✘ Many young players still navigate informal pathways.
- ✘ Residential academies are limited.
- ✘ Sports medicine is underdeveloped.
- ✘ Educational support is inconsistent.
- ✘ Professional career planning frequently depends on intermediaries rather than institutions.

The dominant model often revolves around the hope of a transfer rather than the systematic construction of a career.

Kobo Sport proposes a different approach. Rather than focusing exclusively on technical training, it seeks to organize the entire value chain.



**TALENT IS  
ABUNDANT.  
STRUCTURE  
IS SCARCE.**

# BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

The project rests on five complementary pillars.



## ELITE SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Football and basketball infrastructure designed around international standards.



## EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A sport-study model intended to prepare athletes for life beyond competition.



## HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

Sports medicine, physiotherapy and performance science integrated into everyday development.



## TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

Digital monitoring, performance analytics and athlete documentation designed to increase visibility and long-term value.



## HOSPITALITY AND EVENTS

Facilities capable of hosting tournaments, corporate events and visiting teams while generating recurring revenues.



Sport should not begin when athletes step onto the field.

**It begins much earlier.**

# MORE THAN AN ACADEMY

Many sports academies measure success through transfers.

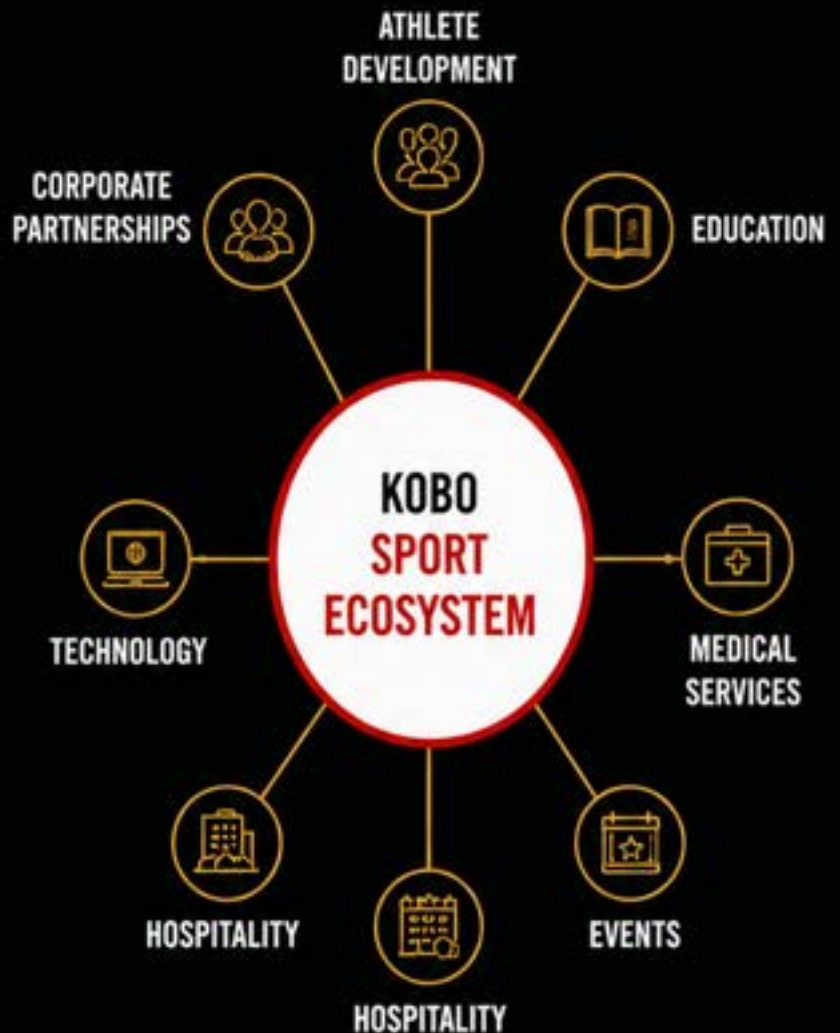
Kobo Sport measures success through ecosystem building.

Its integrated model seeks to reduce dependence on a single source of revenue by combining multiple activities.

- ✓ Athlete development
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Medical services
- ✓ Events
- ✓ Hospitality
- ✓ Corporate partnerships
- ✓ Technology

This diversified approach aims to create a more resilient business model while strengthening the local sports economy.

AN INTEGRATED MODEL.  
MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS.



ONE ECOSYSTEM.  
MANY SOURCES OF VALUE.

# WHY KINSHASA?

Few cities combine the demographic and sporting characteristics of Kinshasa.



## ONE OF THE LARGEST URBAN CENTRES IN AFRICA

A metropolis of over 17 million inhabitants and growing.



## THE LARGEST FRANCOPHONE METROPOLIS IN THE WORLD

A strategic linguistic and cultural advantage in the global sports industry.



## A DEEP RESERVOIR OF FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL TALENT

Raw, abundant and still largely untapped.



## A STRATEGIC GATEWAY TO CENTRAL AFRICA

Direct access to a region of more than 150 million people.



## A CITY READY TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Improving infrastructure, connectivity and a strong appetite for development.



**17M+**

Population  
Kinshasa metro area



**64%**

Under 25 years old  
A young, dynamic population



**TOP 3**

Untapped raw talent pool in Africa

 **LOCATION IS NOT SIMPLY GEOGRAPHY. IT IS STRATEGY.**





“

THE NEXT  
FRONTIER IS  
NOT DISCOVERING  
MORE TALENT.  
THE WORLD  
ALREADY KNOWS  
AFRICA CAN  
DO THAT.

THE NEXT FRONTIER  
IS BUILDING  
INSTITUTIONS  
CAPABLE OF  
TRANSFORMING  
TALENT INTO  
LONG-TERM  
ECONOMIC VALUE.

# THE NEXT FRONTIER: DATA, INSTITUTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL

The future of African football may not be decided on the pitch.  
It may be decided in databases.

For decades, the continent has approached football primarily as a sporting activity. The rest of the world increasingly treats it as an information business.

Modern clubs do not simply recruit players. They collect data. They map audiences. They document performance. They monetize digital communities. They transform information into financial value.

Africa still excels at producing footballers. But it often struggles to document them.

As *The Invisible Athlete* argues, this gap carries a significant economic cost. Millions of euros in potential training compensation can become difficult to recover when player histories are incomplete. Clubs with enormous fan bases remain commercially undervalued because those audiences are only partially measured. Investors hesitate because informal systems generate uncertain returns.

The irony is that Africa may already possess one of football's greatest comparative advantages: a young population and an extraordinary reservoir of talent.

What is missing is infrastructure.





Not only stadiums. Administrative infrastructure. Digital infrastructure. Institutional infrastructure.

The countries likely to dominate African football over the next decade may not simply be those that produce the best players. They may be those that build the best systems around them.

Morocco's long-term investments ahead of the 2030 FIFA World Cup illustrate how football can become part of a broader economic and infrastructure strategy. Airports, transport, stadiums and tourism are increasingly planned together rather than separately.

The lesson extends beyond one country.

African football does not need to imitate Europe. But it does need to become more visible.

-  A player with a verified history is easier to protect.
-  A club with measurable supporters is easier to sponsor.
-  A league with reliable data is easier to broadcast.
-  A sports sector with documented assets is easier to finance.

The next frontier is not discovering more talent.

The world already knows Africa can do that.

The next frontier is building institutions capable of transforming talent into long-term economic value.

Because in modern football, data is no longer a luxury. **It is infrastructure.**



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INSIGHTS.  
PERFORMANCE.



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DIFFERENTLY.



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CONVERSATIONS.  
BETTER GAME.



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- 👉 COACHES
- 📊 DATA SCIENTISTS
- 🔍 ANALYSTS
- 👤 INDUSTRY LEADERS



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BETTER INSIGHTS.  
BETTER GAME.**

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# ABOUT US

## BUILDING THE FUTURE OF SPORT IN AFRICA.

Kobo Sport is an integrated sports ecosystem built in Central Africa with a bold mission: **to transform raw talent into sustainable economic value and global impact.**

Founded in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kobo Sport develops world-class infrastructure, elite academies, sports performance services, hospitality, events and education.

We believe in Africa. We invest in people. We build for generations.

### OUR CO-FOUNDERS



**SIDONIE LATÈRE**

Co-Founder

Founder of Kobo Hub. 15+ years of organizational management in DRC. Proven operational track record and oversight of multi-million € projects.



**ANDRÉ-MICHEL ESSOUNGOU**

Co-Founder

Co-founder of Go4it Sports Tech. Ex-991/BBC Foreign Correspondent & Ex-UN Adviser. Master in Football Management, Johan Cruyff Institute (Barcelona). Published author on football, Africa, and data.

## MEDIA, CONTENT & EDUCATION: NOW PART OF THE KOBO SPORT ECOSYSTEM

To inform, inspire and empower the next generation of sports professionals and leaders, Kobo Sport develops premium media and educational content.

### FOOTBALL BUSINESS AFRICA



#### FOOTBALL BUSINESS MAGAZINE AFRICA

The leading business publication dedicated to the business of football in Africa. Insight. Analysis. Solutions.



#### KOBO SPORT PODCAST

Conversations with leaders, innovators and changemakers shaping the future of sport in Africa and worldwide.

### LE PODCAST DE JOJO



Le Podcast de Jojo brings candid discussions, field insights and practical wisdom for agents, clubs, athletes and entrepreneurs.

## EDUCATION IS AT THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

We equip the next generation of professionals with knowledge, tools and certification to raise standards, create opportunities and drive sustainability in African sport.



#### RAISE STANDARDS

Professionalize the sports industry through best practices and certification.



#### CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Open doors for young talents and future sports leaders.



#### DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY

Build ethically run and financially resilient sports organizations.



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- ✓ Expert support

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ACADEMIES & INFRASTRUCTURE



HEALTH & PERFORMANCE



HOSPITALITY & EVENTS



EDUCATION & CONTENT



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS & IMPACT

# BUILDING THE FUTURE OF FOOTBALL IN AFRICA.

# kobo sport

THE EPICENTER  
OF FOOTBALL  
IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

Football Business Africa is part of the **Kobo Sport** ecosystem.

Together, we inform, inspire and empower the next generation of sports professionals and leaders through media, education and world-class infrastructure.



## MEDIA & CONTENT



### FOOTBALL BUSINESS AFRICA

The leading business publication dedicated to the business of football in Africa. Insight. Analysis. Solutions.



### KOBO SPORT PODCAST

Conversations with leaders, innovators and changemakers shaping the future of sport in Africa and worldwide.



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Field insights and practical wisdom for agents, clubs, athletes and entrepreneurs.

## EDUCATION



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- Comprehensive study guide
- 400+ practice questions
- Regulation updates
- Real-life case studies
- Bilingual resources
- Online access, anytime
- Expert support

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Kobo Football Campus is a world-class hub in Kinshasa, DRC, designed to unlock talent, drive development and create lasting impact.



**12 HA**  
TITLED LAND  
KINSHASA



**FIFA**  
STANDARD  
FACILITIES



**120**  
ACADEMY PLAYERS  
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM



**EUROPE**  
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